

## **Response of the Judicial Branch to Governor Patrick's FY10 Budget**

### **Joint Statement of Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall & Chief Justice for Administration & Management Robert A. Mulligan**

**January 28, 2009**

We recognize the severity of the fiscal situation facing Governor Patrick and know that sacrifices will be required of every public entity statewide. In anticipation of these challenges we have supported the Governor's efforts and restricted our spending throughout the Judicial Branch for more than a year.

We appreciate that the Governor made every reasonable effort to respond to our candid request for adequate funding. We still must work with the Legislature for additional funding to ensure our ability to conduct our core functions. The \$560 million Trial Court budget issued by Governor Patrick represents an 11 percent reduction to the maintenance budget we submitted for FY10, and a 7.4 percent reduction to our FY09 appropriation, which we voluntarily cut by \$22 million at the Governor's request in October 2008. The Governor's budget proposal for the Appellate Courts made comparable reductions to the original FY09 appropriation, which also had been reduced by voluntary cuts.

We also value the critical steps taken by the Governor to enhance the Trial Court's ability to manage its resources. The consolidation of accounts, full transferability, and other management controls will provide the flexibility needed to take essential actions during these challenging times.

We recognize that we must apply close attention and diligence to the collection of revenues for probation supervision and filing fees, which now will comprise an increased component of our FY10 budget.

Additional difficult decisions will be necessary as we continue to evaluate the level of services we provide and the number of locations where we deliver justice. Already, more than 50 percent of courthouses are staffed below minimal levels determined by an objective, national staffing model.

The courts are integral to the safety and security of communities across the state and in the midst of this national economic crisis, thousands of court users are dealing with crime, domestic violence, evictions, foreclosures, child abuse, and custody disputes. The courts must have the resources to facilitate timely resolutions in order to limit additional negative impact on families and communities.

As the Judicial Branch continues to provide one third of the core function of state government, while comprising only 2.4 percent of the state budget, we must ensure that the public has absolute confidence that we are managing our resources scrupulously. We will face this difficult fiscal challenge responsibly with the cooperation, dedication, and leadership of all who work in the Judicial Branch to assure the uninterrupted delivery of quality justice in the Commonwealth.